

## NEWS NOTES

DR. FRANK LAMSON-SCRIBNER, United States agrostologist and first director of the Philippine Department of Agriculture, died in Washington on February 22. Dr. Scribner was known as an authority on American grasses. His work in the Philippines in developing modern methods of agriculture has had important results. Dr. G. E. Juan, who was associated with him in his work, writes the following: "There was something in the face of this modest man that manifested the true greatness of mind, which likewise appeared in all he said, obliging us to regard him with a sort of veneration. His spirit lives on in the new depths and breadth and fullness of life that through his work and influence have brought new comforts to the rural homes, new conveniences to the work of the farmer and the young people of the farms, new ideals of success and happiness on their own lands and among their own people."

NORMAN MCCLINTOCK, photo-naturalist of Rutgers University died at Orlando, Fla., on February 27 in his seventieth year. He was well known for his time-lapse motion pictures of plant growth and movement and pictures of animal life. He had lectured widely on animal life and the growth of plants.

DR. PAUL B. SEARS, professor of botany at the University of Oklahoma, author of "Deserts on the March," has been appointed head of the department of botany at Oberlin College.

### PROTECTION FOR *Typha angustifolia*

An interesting bill which was introduced into the Assembly, in Albany, in the 1938 session, by Hon. Lawrence W. Van Cleef, of Seneca Falls, Seneca County prohibits the cutting or destruction of narrow leaved Cat-tail, *Typha angustifolia*, on state-owned lands, before Sept. 15 in each year. It seemed so unusual that I asked Assemblyman Van Cleef for his reasons for the bill. He explained them as follows:

"In my section of the state there is considerable state owned land, and on this land this plant grows in abundance. The tight cooperage trade or the making of wooden barrels tight enough to hold liquid contents use the leaf of this flag as a caulking between the staves to make these containers water tight.

"There seems to be no substitute for this method. This represents an industry in my locality of perhaps \$200,000 per year.

If this flag is cut before September 15, it has not reached its mature state, and when dry it shrivels and is worthless."

Presumably the narrow leaved cat-tail is more suitable for such purposes, because longer and fitting the staves better than the broad-leaved species, *Typha latifolia*. If cut before Sept. 15, the seeds are perhaps not quite ripe, although extension is largely due to rootstocks. It is probably an interesting survival of an old custom, by which botanical principles have considerable practical application.

R. H. TORREY

#### BILL TO REMOVE *Trapa natans* AS A NUISANCE

Another botanical bill introduced in the 1938 Legislature at Albany, proposed the eradication of the Water Chestnut, *Trapa natans*, as a nuisance along the shores of the Mohawk River. This bill, by Assemblyman James J. Carroll of Albany, was an amendment to the Conservation Law, "in relation to authorizing and directing the conservation Department to abate nuisances created by the presence of water or river chestnuts along the shores of the waters of the Mohawk River between the cities of Cohoes and Little Falls and to remove the same," and making an appropriation of \$25,000. The bill was not reported out from the Committee and so was not acted on.

*Trapa natans*, the water chestnut, is a very interesting plant, in that after it was eliminated in America, following the Tertiary Epoch, by disturbances affecting many species, it has now appeared in North America, as a scattering adventive, which seems to do very well where established and to spread rapidly. Gray's Manual (1908) reported it in quiet streams, in Schenectady County, N.Y., which was evidently the source of the present large Mohawk Valley infestation, and in Middlesex County, Mass., "introduced from Eurasia." Mr. Carroll tells us that the plants in the Mohawk River are from seeds imported from Germany about ten years ago by a group of local sportsmen, who planted them thinking it would be valuable food for wild ducks and so a boon to hunters. Frere Marie-Victorin, of the University of Montreal, says it exists in southern Europe as a relic. Last year, driving north from North Carolina, waiting for the ferry from Colonial Beach to Potomac Beach, across the Potomac River, Louis W. Anderson, of Newark, picked up large quantities of the curious horned seed vessel, on the beach, so it must occur somewhere along the Potomac below Washington, where the seeds had been floated.

The trouble caused by the plant is due to the long tough stems, crowded with toothed leaves above, and finely cut leaves below water, which fill canals, ponds, and other quiet waters, so as to prevent bathing and boating. The name is abridged from *calcitrapa*, a caltrop, in allusion to the spreading points of the fruit. (The Bur-grass, *Cenchrus*, has a species, *tribuloides*, named for *tribulus*, another word for the caltrop, which was a sphere of iron, with sharp points sticking in every direction, to catch the feet of cavalry horses. The extent of the plant seems hardly to justify such potent measures on the Mohawk. If it is established there, the chances are it will appear elsewhere down the Hudson before long.

Dr. Alexander W. Evans, professor of botany at Yale University celebrated his seventieth birthday on May 17. Dr. Evans is well known for his work on the Hepaticae and lichens. A special volume of *Annales Bryologici* is being prepared—with a biographical note and a portrait of Dr. Evans, together with some twenty five contributions from leading American and European bryologists and hepaticologists. (Science)

The New York Botanical Garden has recently acquired two large and important collections of Myxomycetes. Mr. Robert Hagelstein, Honorary Curator of Myxomycetes, has presented his collection of over 4800 specimens, the majority of which were personally collected by Mr. Hagelstein and his associates in the States along the Atlantic Coast from Maine to Virginia, and in the West Indies. Among them, also, are about 1500 specimens from other parts of the world received in exchange. The Garden has acquired by purchase the collection of nearly 3000 specimens made by Dr. William C. Sturgis, the result of a lifetime's collection and study, and accompanied by his literature, notes, drawings, and the correspondence with other students covering a period of 40 years. Both collections are rich in type material, rare species and varieties, and unusual phases. The entire collection of the Garden, which includes also the specimens collected by the late J. B. Ellis, now comprises more than 10,000 specimens and is probably the largest and finest in North America, and one of the important collections of the world. It is catalogued and arranged so that any particular specimen may be found. There is a large amount of duplicate material—even in rare species—which is available for exchange with other institutions and students, and correspondence is invited.

Louise Beebe Wilder, horticulturist and author, died in New York on April 20. Mrs. Wilder had been a member of the Ad-

visory Council of the New York Botanical Garden since April 1936. In recent years it is doubtful if any one individual had a greater influence on American horticulture than Mrs. Wilder. In 1936 she was awarded the Gold Medal of Honor of the Garden Club of America for her "outstanding achievement in introducing the growing of alpine plants in this country, for her general knowledge of horticulture, and for her many books on gardening." Her books and innumerable magazine articles, one of which had appeared every month for a number of years in *House and Garden*, were noteworthy in that they reflected exclusively her own experiences. In her small but remarkable garden in Bronxville she raised rare plants from all over the world, and she was able to tell others how they too could develop unusual and successful gardens.

The first letter in many months from Dr. A. C. Smith was written February 22 from John Melville's ranch, Wichabai, on the Rupununi River in British Guiana, where Dr. Smith was making his headquarters for an additional three months of botanical collecting after other members of the Terry-Holden Expedition had returned to Georgetown and New York. The letter was received by Dr. W. H. Snedigar, herpetologist of the American Museum of Natural History, also remained to collect in an adjacent region. The two men plan to start for home in June, when John Melville, who has lived in the interior of British Guiana for many years, will transport them down to the coast.

With Mr. Snedigar, Dr. Smith worked in the Shodikar region—Shodikar Creek is the last eastern affluent of the Upper Essequibo—and in the Akarai Mountains for three weeks, spending a couple of days on the Brazilian slopes in the Trombetas basin.

Dr. Smith is the first man ever to make a botanical collection in the region of the upper Trombetas River, which until two or three years ago was entirely inaccessible.

The summer meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science will be held at Ottawa from June 27 to July 2. The Section on Botanical Sciences will hold a symposium on "Physiographic Problems of Northeastern Canada." The Ecological Society of America will have scientific sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and field trips on Friday and Saturday. The American Society of Plant Physiologists, the American Phytopathological Society, the Society of American Foresters, and the Genetics Society of America will also hold sessions.